

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-20 IGA-02

SR-02 ORM-03 SCA-01 IO-12 STR-08 RSR-01 NIC-01 /216 W
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3929

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

TEHRAN FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR IN

SUBJECT: FOOD RIOTS IN MAHARASHTRA STATE

1. FOOD DEMONSTRATIONS BROKE OUT IN SOME PARTS OF DROUGHT
STRICKEN MAHARASHTRA STATE DURING PAST WEEK IN PROTEST AGAINST
INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS, SHARP INCREASE IN PRICES AND LOW
WAGES TO WORKERS EMPLOYED IN DROUGHT RELIEF PROJECTS. THESE
DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE RESULTED IN LOOTING OF FOODGRAIN
SHOPS, MOB VIOLENCE, AND POLICE ACTION IN THREE PLACES
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SO FAR-- NAGPUR CITY AND MALEGON AND SINNER TOWNS OF NASIK DISTRICT. ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, AT LEAST TEN PERSONS HAVE LOST LIVES IN DISTURBANCES IN THE AFFECTED AREAS. WHILE ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO MOVE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES OF FOODGRAINS, SITUATION IN AFFECTED AREAS IS REPORTED TO BE STILL TENSE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED AN INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF FOODGRAIN RATIONS FROM FAIR PRICE SHOPS IN NAGPUR CITY FROM FIVE TO SEVEN KILOGRAMS PER MONTH

PER ADULT UNIT. THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ANNOUNCED AN INCREASE OF 50 PAISER PER DAY IN THE WAGES OF WORKERS ENGAGED IN DROUGHT RELIEF PROJECTS AND HAS ALSO ALLOWED BOYS AND GIRLS ABOVE 14 YEARS OF AGE TO WORK ON THESE PROJECTS.

2. COMMENT: THE PRESENT FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE DROUGHT AFFECTED STATES, IS VERY TIGHT AND IS NOT LIKELY TO IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY UNTIL THE GOI GAINS CONTROL OF LARGER QUANTITIES OF FOODGRAINS TO DISTRIBUTE THROUGH RETAIL OUTLETS.

THIS DEPENDS UPON A SUCCESSFUL PROCUREMENT PROGRAM WHICH IS STILL UNCERTAIN.

3. FOOD RIOTS IN NAGPUR AGAINST INADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF GRAIN IN THE FAIR PRICE FOOD SHOPS WERE THE FIRST PUBLIC OUTBURST ON A LARGE SCALE IN ANY MAJOR CITY FOLLOWING THE STATE TAKEOVER OF THE WHOLESALE WHEAT TRADE. IN THE PAST CONSUMERS COULD SUPPLEMENT THE LIMITED QUANTITY OF GRAIN AVAILABLE TO THEM IN RATIONS FROM THE

FAIR PRICE SHOPS BY MAKING PURCHASES FROM THE OPEN MARKET. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING THE TAKEOVER OF THE WHOLESALE WHEAT TRADE, SUPPLIES OF WHEAT IN MANY MAJOR CITIES HAS RISEN SHARPLY SINCE THE TAKEOVER. SIMILAR PUBLIC OUTBURSTS WILL LIKELY OCCUR IN OTHER CITIES IF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FOODGRAINS ARE NOT MADE AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS AT THE FAIR PRICE SHOPS.
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